uneconomic production, poor management, old and outdated technology and low profitability.

(e) *Nagaland Pulp & Paper Co. Ltd.:*

The company was referred to BIFR in 1992 and the Government has decided to revive the mill and the company since stands discharged as Sick Industrial Company from the purview of BIFR and the Government has approved the financial restructuring.

Mandya National Paper Mills :

The company was referred to BIFR in 1992 and the BIFR ordered winding up of the mill. The Government has filed appeal against the order of BIFR before AAFIR and the Government has decided to re-start the operations of the mill and privatise it as a going concern.

STATEMENT

S.No.	Name of State	No. of Closed Mills
1.	Assam	1
2.	Bihar	3
3.	West Bengal	15
4.	Orissa	1
5.	Uttar Pradesh	13
6.	Delhi	1
7.	Punjab	5
8.	Haryana	4
9.	Chandigarh	3
10.	Himachal Pradesh	10
11.	Rajasthan	5
12.	Gujarat	8
13.	Maharashtra	11
14.	Madhya Pradesh	7
15.	Andhra Pradesh	14
16.	Karnataka	8
17.	Tamil Nadu	8
18.	Kerala	2
19.	Pondicherry	2
20.	Nagaland	1
	Total	122

Manufacture of Mini Cigarettes by ITC

2182. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have decided to withdraw the permission granted to Indian Tobacco Company to manufacture mini cigarettes;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any objections in this regard have been received from any quarter;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the profit earned by ITC since permission was granted; and

(f) whether the sale of mini cigarettes proposed to be prohibited?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). No, Sir. Industrial Licences for the manufacture of cigarettes are granted in terms of numbers and not length-wise. The concept of mini cigarettes is relevant from the Excise Duty point of view. Since lower rate of Excise Duty on mini cigarettes has been introduced from 1994-95 and Industrial Licences for the manufacture of cigarettes were issued to M/s. ITC long ago, the question of cancellation of such licences issued under the I(D&R) Act, 1951 does not arise.

(c) and (d). The Bidi Sector has expressed apprehensions regarding lowering of Excise Duty on mini cigarettes as it may affect the Bidi industry. There has, however, been no significant change in the production of bidis since reduction of Excise Duty on mini cigarettes.

(e) M/s. ITC have indicated the following production figures in their Annual Reports for the years 1994, 1995 and 1996 in respect of cigarettes :

	Quantity (million nos.)	Value (in Rs. lakhs)
1994	48387	29,81,45
1995	50609	33,35,72
1996	60972	41,05,98

Separate figures in respect of mini cigarettes are not available.

(f) No, Sir.

Defrauding of U.B.I. Mumbai

2183. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any branch of the United Bank of India, in Mumbai, was defrauded of Rs. 8 lacs during September, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the *modus operandi* adopted therein; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure that such incidents do not recur?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c). United Bank of India have reported that three cheques for Rs. 8 lakhs were issued by a staff of their Kalbadevi Branch at Mumbai. These

cheques were lodged by him for crediting to his account with Sangli Sahakari Bank Ltd. When these cheques were presented by the Sangli Sahakari Bank for payment through clearing, he fraudulently managed to remove these cheques and also carried out accounting manipulations at Kalbadevi branch. In the absence of any return memo, Sangli Sahakari Bank had credited the amount to his account which was later on withdrawn by him.

The concerned staff has been placed under suspension. An FIR has been lodged with the local police who have arrested him. According to the bank the fraud has occurred apparently owing to supervisory failure in enforcing the laid down systems and procedures.

Serious Frauds Office

2184. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Raids kill spirit to take economic risks - CBI found inadequate, FM urged to set up serious Frauds Office" appearing in the 'Economic Times' dated November 13, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein,

(c) whether Banking and Financial market circles have also urged the Government to set up a Serious Frauds Office (SFO) or judicial cell within the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to investigate objectives of the economic offences of criminal nature; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d). The news items refers to inter-alia the demand for setting up of a Serious Frauds Office to investigate economic offences of a criminal nature. A proposal to set up a Sepcial Bureau of Frauds to deal with banking and financial frauds is under consideration of Government.

Weaver's Welfare Fund

2185. SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the balance in the Weaver's Welfare Fund as on April 1,1995 and April 1,1996;

(b) the additions made to the fund during 1995-96; and

(c) the funds allocated through this Fund for the various welfare programmes for weavers during each of the last three years, Scheme-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c). There is no scheme called "Weavers Welfare Fund". However; Government of India is implementing Thrift Fund Scheme, Group Insurance Scheme and Health Package Scheme for the Welfare of Handloom Weavers. Central assistance under these Welfare Schemes have increased over the year and gone up from Rs. 699.99 lakhs during 1993-94 to Rs. 987.98 lakhs during 1995-96.

Detection of F.D. Account in Rural Branch of Allahabad Bank

2186. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the CBI has recently detected a fixed deposit account for lakhs of rupees in a rural branch of the Allahabad Bank;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the *modus operandi* adopted therein;

(c) whether any inquiry has since been conducted in regard thereto;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the outcome of the enquiry so conducted; and

(e) the action proposed to be taken to check such other bogus accounts in the private and public sector banks?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (e). Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has reported that during the course of investigation in animal hubandry department cases, it has detected certain suspected benami accounts aggregating Rs. 64,46,086/- at seven rural branches of the bank in Patna District. The accounts were opened without observing the necessary formalities like collection of specimen signatures, properly filling of account opening application forms, collection of photographs, etc. CBI's investigation has not yet been completed.

In order to ensure that such accounts are not opened, RBI have advised banks to obtain photographs of persons authorised to operate the accounts and also obtain confirmation of the addresses of the account holders independently. The inspecting officers are also required to ensure compliance with norms prescribed with opening of accounts.

Selection and Appointment in PSOs

2187. SHRI ISWAR PRASANNA HAZARIKA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the details of policies and or rules prescribed for regulation, selection and appointment to top level posts in the public sector enterprises;